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SUBJECT: TRAVEL ALERT: GABON

¶1. The Department of State alerts U.S. citizens to the risks of travel to Gabon following the death of Gabonese President El-Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba on June 8, 2009 in Spain. The president's remains were returned to Gabon on June 11, with state and private funerals scheduled to occur through Thursday, June 18. A 30-day period of mourning began on June 8. An interim head of state was sworn in and, under Gabon's constitution, must organize elections within 45 days. This Travel Alert expires on July 25, 2009.

¶2. While the U.S. Embassy expects the funeral week, the national mourning period, and the ensuing presidential election to develop peacefully and in an orderly fashion, American citizens should be aware that even peaceful gatherings and demonstrations can turn violent unexpectedly. Significant traffic congestion, shortages in hotel lodgings, and large crowds throughout the country, particularly in Libreville, are likely to inconvenience travelers.

¶3. The Department of State discourages non-essential travel to Gabon on the part of U.S. Government officials and U.S. citizens just before or immediately after the state funeral.

¶4. American citizens in Gabon should monitor their own security situations at all times, and avoid large public gatherings, protests, and demonstrations. American citizens are encouraged to report unusual events or activities to the U.S. Embassy.

¶5. Updated information on travel and security in Gabon may be obtained from the Department of State by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the U.S. and Canada or, for callers outside the U.S. and Canada, on a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. Additional details can be found

in the Department of State's Country Specific Information for Gabon and the Worldwide Caution, which are available on the Department's Internet website at <http://travel.state.gov>.

¶6. The Embassy is located in Centre Ville on the Boulevard du Bord de Mer, and may be reached at 76-20-03/04 during business hours. In case of emergency, a 24-hour duty officer may be reached after hours at 07-38-01-¶71.

¶7. Minimize considered.
CLINTON